

**Consideration of the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry's
Classified Forest & Wildlands Program Policy Document; Administrative Cause
No. 15-013F**

Classified Forest & Wildlands Program Policy Document
CFW PD – Improvements 8-29-08

IMPROVEMENTS ON CLASSIFIED LANDS

BACKGROUND:

Land enrolled in the Classified Forest & Wildlands Program is still privately-owned. In order to manage the land and use it in ways not restricted by the Classified Forest & Wildland Program, the landowner may want to make improvements to the land (structures, roads, and trails).

The Classified Forest & Wildlands enabling legislation (IC 6-1.1-6) provides limited guidance on property improvements. IC 6-1.1-6-6 states "A parcel of land may not be classified as native forest land, a forest plantation, or wildlands if a dwelling or other building is situated on the parcel." No further guidance is given.

The Classified Forest & Wildlands Program is administered at the county level by 20 district foresters. District foresters are fairly autonomous and have each developed slight different interpretation of what type of property improvements are allowed on Classified Forest & Wildlands parcels.

OBJECTIVES: The objectives of this document are the following:

- 1) Clarify which property improvements (structures, roads and trails) are allowed on Classified Forest & Wildlands parcels.
- 2) Increase the consistency on how property improvements are treated across districts.

TYPES OF IMPROVEMENTS NOT ALLOWED

IC 6-1.1-6-6 A parcel of land may not be classified as native forest land, a forest plantation, or wildlands if a dwelling or other building is situated on the parcel.

For purposes of this policy dwelling is defined as follows:

A **dwelling** is any building that contains living facilities including provisions for sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation for one or more persons or a mobile structure containing provisions for sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation for one or more persons that is permanently parked.

For purposes of this policy **building** is defined as follows:

A **building** is a structure with or without utilities with the following characteristics:

- Permanently attached to the ground - this does not include support poles for elevated structures that must be secured in the ground for safety reasons.
- Structure footprint greater than 20 sq ft
- Walls and a roof

TYPES OF IMPROVEMENTS ALLOWED

All improvements should be documented in management plan and/or reinspection reports.

RECREATION RELATED

Hunting/wildlife viewing blinds

Ground level blind:

- No utilities allowed
- Smaller than 70 sq ft footprint (two sheets of 4' x 8' plywood floor with walls)
- No permanent foundation, structure must be moveable

Elevated blind:

- No utilities allowed
- No larger than 70 sq ft floor (two sheets of 4' x 8' plywood floor with walls)
- For safety reasons, structure may be secured to ground

Recreation Camper/Trailers/Tents:

- Must be maintained in a moveable condition, the intent is that they are permanently parked on the property but are used for short duration or seasonally.
- May not be used for commercial purposes.

Picnic Shelters:

- No utilities
- No walls
- Floor material not restricted

Outhouse:

- No utilities
- Footprint less than 20 sq. ft.

ACCESS RELATED

Driveways

Access Road

Trails

Bridges

Docks

In general existing access related property improvements are allowed provided they are consistent with the size of the parcel and are maintained to minimize erosion. The surface type is not restricted. Maintenance along the access feature is of concern. Extensive mowing/landscaping (greater than the width of the road) is not allowed. Creation of new access related improvements may require a special permit.

WATER RELATED

Dams

Dikes

In general existing water related property improvements are allowed provided they are consistent with the size of the parcel and are maintained to minimize erosion (good vegetative cover). Creation of new access related improvements may require a special permit.

RIGHT OF WAYS

Power Lines

Buried Pipe Lines

Existing right of ways are allowed provided they are covered in vegetation consistent with wildlands criteria or fescue in areas with erosion concerns.

MISCELLANEOUS

Windmills

Cell Phone Towers

Oil Derricks

Billboards

Utility Pole

All the above are allowed provided there is no building attached and they are consistent with the size of the parcel.

Abandoned/Nonfunctional Buildings

- No improvements may be made
- Encourage removal and clean-up when practical

Abandoned/ Non-Active Trash Dumps

- No new dumping may occur
- Encourage removal and clean-up when practical